



Substance Abuse in High School Students in Association with Socio-Demographic Variables in Northwest of Iran

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Abstract

Background: Substance abuse in adolescents and its often tragic consequences, including addiction, is one of the preventable major public health problems. The aims of this paper were to estimate the prevalence of substance abuse and to evaluate its some associated factors in adolescents of Tabriz City (northwest of Iran).

Methods: A self-administered questionnaire was completed in 4903 randomly selected students with mean age of 15.7 years old. The aim of the questionnaire was obtaining information on substance abuse, socio-economical information, cigarette smoking behavior, general risk taking behavior, self-esteem, attitude towards smoking and self-injury as well as demographical characteristics.

Results: Prevalence of substance abuse was 1.4% (95% CI: 1.1–1.7) which was different statistically significant between boys (2.4%) and girls (0.6%) ($P < 0.001$). Older age (OR=1.43), not living with parents (OR=2.34), having general risk taking behavior (OR=2.26), higher smoking stage (OR=2.39), lower self-esteem (OR=1.09) and positive attitude toward smoking (OR=1.08) were factors associated with student's ever use of substance.

Conclusion: The result has shown low prevalence of substance abuse in Iranian adolescents. Our findings showed some associated factors such as lower self-esteem with adolescent's substance abuse.

Keywords: Adolescents, Substance abuse, Smoking, Risk taking behavior, Iran

Introduction

Substance abuse in adolescents and its often tragic consequences, including addiction, is one of the preventable major public health problems. Because of not yet fully development in parts of the adolescent's brain that responsible for judgment, decision making, emotion and impulse control, they are more likely than adults to take risks, including experimenting with addictive substances and engaging in dangerous behaviors while under

their influence, and highly susceptible to external social influences to engage in risky behaviors (1-3). The younger an individual is at the onset of the substance abuse, the more risk developing substance use disorders and continuing into adulthood. Over 90 percent of adults diagnosed with substance use disorders have experienced drug use before age 18 and half of them before age 15 (4-7).